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SUBJECT: GEORGIANS RELEASE PEACEKEEPERS' TRUCK, KEEP
AMMUNITION

REF: TBILISI 1031

¶1. The Georgian Ministry of Interior announced on June 19 that it had released the CIS PKF ammunition truck that was detained on June 17 (reftel) for unauthorized ammunition transfer through the Georgian side of the conflict zone. Deputy Minister of Interior Shota Utiashvili said that the Ministry of Interior would keep the 20 anti-tank missiles seized from the truck until an investigation is completed. Utiashvili did not specify when the missiles would be released. Georgian media also reported on June 19 two blasts along a section of the Abkhaz railway outside of Sukhumi. The blasts occurred approximately nine kilometers north of the section where the recently introduced Russian railway troops are conducting repairs to the line. No injuries and only minor damage to the line were reported, though Abkhaz officials were quick to call the bombing a "terrorist act" directed against the Russian railway troops.

¶2. On June 20, Georgian media reported that the CIS peacekeepers were establishing a checkpoint north of Ochimchire, inside the restricted weapons zone. Media analysts speculated that the new base would facilitate peacekeeper movement into the Georgian-controlled portion of the Kodori gorge. The United Nations Observer Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG) confirmed that a small detachment of the newly-installed paratrooper battalion had set up a checkpoint in the village of Agu-Bedia, which is north of Ochimchire, but still within the restricted weapons zone (and within the CIS peacekeeper's mandate). UNOMIG indicated, however, that this small force - 10 peacekeepers, 2 BTR armored personnel carriers, and 1 truck - had actually redeployed from Akarmara, a village north of Tkvarcheli and much closer to Kodori than Agu-Bedia. A UNOMIG patrol first observed the checkpoint in Agu-Bedia on June 12 during a routine patrol and reportedly encountered some hostility from the local Abkhaz, who demanded the patrol immediately withdraw.

TEFFT